



Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Early detection is the most effective way to prevent cervical cancer. Routine, annual pelvic exams and Pap tests can detect pre-cancerous conditions that can often be treated successfully before cancer develops. Nationally, the cervical cancer death rate fell 10% from 1991 to 1996 reflecting continued widespread use of Pap screening.¹ The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that women begin annual screening at age 18, or after the onset of sexual activity, whichever occurs first.² Despite the recognized benefits of a Pap test, health officials estimate that about 60-80% of American women with newly diagnosed cases of invasive cervical cancer have not had a Pap test within the past five years and many of these have never had a Pap test. These women are more likely to be elderly, African-American, and low income women.³

The California Women's Health Survey in 2000 asked women ages 18 and older if they

have ever had a Pap test and if they had, how long it has been since their last test.

In 2000, 85% of all women surveyed ages 18 and older reported they had a Pap test within the past three years, 7% within three to five years, and 8% never had a Pap test.

- White (87%), Black (87%), and Hispanic (83%) women were more likely than Asian/Other (70%) women to have a Pap test within the past three years.
- Asian women (25%) were more likely than the other race/ethnic groups to report never having a Pap test compared to White (5%), Black (7%), and Hispanic (10%) women (see graph).

¹ National Cancer Institute, Cancer Facts, 1996

² Smith RA, Mettlin CJ, Davis KJ, Eyre H., American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer, CA Cancer J Clin 2000;50:34-49.

³ American Cancer Society, Cancer Resource Center, Internet Web Page, <http://www.cancer.org>.

PAP TESTING STATUS FOR WOMEN, CALIFORNIA, 2000

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Public Health Message:

The Pap test is a highly effective and widely used screening test for cervical cancer. Many California women, particularly Asians, have never had a Pap test or have not had a Pap test in the past three years

